

This week's DVDs

By MICHAEL GILTZ


**Pee-wee's
Playhouse
Christmas
Special**

 ★★★ ½
 Image, \$14.99

Despite your feelings about his personal life, anyone with an anarchic sensibility should love Pee-wee Herman. This subversive 1988 Christmas special — with guests like Charo, Cher, Little Richard and Grace Jones — is a delight for fans. But it's just the appetizer. In two weeks, they'll be releasing Pee-wee's TV series.

Shrek 2

 ★★
 DreamWorks, \$29.99

Except for Puss in Boots (amusingly voiced by Antonio Banderas), this is just a series of obvious gags and pop cultural references. That's a minority opinion, of course, since "Shrek 2" enjoyed critical acclaim and huge box office. Extras include an "American Idol" spoof. You're better off with the hilarious, timeless "Looney Tunes Golden Collection Volume Two" (Warner Bros., \$64.92), with 60 cartoons including Bugs Bunny in "What's Opera, Doc?"

**Star Trek The
Original Series:
Season Two**

 ★★★ ½
 Paramount, \$129.99

Packaged in a cool tricorder-shaped box, "Star Trek" is rather awkward to handle with a loose booklet that keeps falling out and the discs in an inconvenient case. Thank God the shows are worth the trouble, with Kirk fighting Spock in "Amok Time" and the comic high point "The Trouble With Tribbles." Extras include profiles of Leonard Nimoy and Nichelle Nichols.

**Dr. Strangelove/
The Rapture**

 ★★★★★ each
 Columbia TriStar/New Line;
 \$34.95/\$19.97


Two classics about the end of the world. "Strangelove" is director Stanley Kubrick's black-humored look at mutually assured destruction from 1963, with Peter Sellers (and George C. Scott!) never funnier. "The Rapture" (1991) is far less known — a sober, thrilling drama about a hedonistic woman (Mimi Rogers) who joins a cult that believes the end times are nigh. An unforgettable finale.

**Fire Within:
Cirque Du Soleil**

 ★★ ★
 Columbia TriStar, \$39.95

For all the brickbats reality shows endure, it's a genre that also produces top-notch TV. This solid, Emmy-winning series is a fine example. It follows young performers trying to break into the physically demanding troupe Cirque Du Soleil and create unique stunts for a new show. For a different type of circus, check out "The Simple Life 2: Road Trip" (Fox, \$19.98).